



**Feasibility Study
US 60/GRAND AVENUE (LOOP 303 TO LOOP 101)
ADOT Project No. H 7327 01L**

MEETING MINUTES

**Grand Avenue Working Group – Meeting No. 1 of 5
October 17, 2007
Dysart Community Center, El Mirage**

Working Group Members Present:	Working Group Members Absent:
Ben Roloff, Sun City HOA	Cheryl Street, NW Valley Chamber of Commerce
Bob Jones, Sun City West PORA	Dan Edwards, Surprise
Chuck Ullman, Sun City West PORA	Jim McAllister, Sun Health
Dave McGrew, Surprise	Phil Hanson, WESTMARC
Doug Doede, El Mirage	
Gary Bourne, Sun City HOA	
Jim Schuh, Youngtown	
Larry Ornelius, Youngtown	
Norm Dickson, Recreation Centers of Sun City	
Phil Gordon, NW Valley Chamber of Commerce	
Trent Kubasiak, El Mirage	

ADOT Study Team Members Present:
Mike Delleo, ADOT Sr. Project Manager
Tim Tait, ADOT Community Relations Director
Leanne Cairns, ADOT Project Coordinator
Mike Kies, DMJM Harris Project Manager
Paul Waung, Technical Advisor
Dr. Marty Rozelle, Meeting Co-facilitator
Sue Lewin, Meeting Co-facilitator
David Schwartz, Community Affairs Consultant
Jim Lewin, Meeting Coordinator

1. Tim Tait opened the meeting with an introduction of the study and introduced the Study Team.
2. Dr. Marty Rozelle asked the Working Group to introduce themselves and to share a historical story, observation or concern about Grand Avenue:
 - a) Norm Dickson – Stated that there is not a whole lot he likes about Grand Avenue. He feels mobility for the elderly is an issue.
 - b) Gary Bourne – Gary introduced himself as a Sun City transplant. He remembers when Grand Avenue was two 10-foot paved lanes in the middle of the desert. Bell Road was a trail and Grand was used to commute to Phoenix for shopping. He indicated there is no transit in the Sun City area. He has seen Grand Avenue designated as a NAFTA corridor in 1990 and then as part of the CANMEX project. He says he also has seen trash and atomic waste carried on Grand through the Sun City elderly community. He said a lot of residents travel within the community by means of golf carts (estimated at 20,000), and there are also members of the community that only can get around via motorized wheelchairs. He feels there is a need for grade separations to accommodate these needs.



- c) Ben Roloff – According to Mr. Roloff, the unique attributes of Grand Avenue transportation make it a classic case in retrospect of planning a retirement community. He said having the community divided by a US Highway was not a good plan and it will likely not be replicated. He said he is participating in the study to represent the concerns of Sun City, and he also feels there should be two grade separations in Sun City.
- d) Phil Gordon – Mr. Gordon owns two shops along Grand Avenue, one in Peoria and one in Surprise. He indicated that previous construction on Grand resulted in a decline in his business, and he hopes the future construction will include improved access to all businesses. He added that his Peoria location has been on Grand Avenue for 80 years.
- e) Jim Schuh – Mr. Schuh said he likes the grade separations that were installed east of this project and would like to see more designed for this historic highway.
- f) Larry Ornelius – Mr. Ornelius has owned National Glass in Youngtown since 1972, and Grand Avenue is a main artery for his service company. He said he used to have his staff shy away from Grand until the improvements in Glendale and Phoenix were completed, and he hopes to see the same type of improvements up north to allow better traffic flow. He stated he doesn't want to see additional traffic lights installed, as that would continue to impede the flow of traffic. According to Mr. Ornelius, several red lights have been installed on Grand Avenue as development occurred, and ADOT cannot put an overpass every half-mile. He suggested that the current traffic lights along the corridor should be coordinated to improve the traffic flow.

He asked who's responsible for the cost of intersection improvements. He referenced Anthem at I-17 and the developer's participation in the costs. Mike Delleo answered that ADOT is responsible for improvements along this segment of Grand Avenue.

- g) Trent Kubasiak – Mr. Kubasiak represents the City of El Mirage. He said he assumed Grand Avenue was a main thoroughfare and asked if Grand Avenue is intended to be downgraded to a lower capacity roadway, such as a local circulator. Project engineer Mike Kies (DMJM Harris) indicated that the MAG *Grand Avenue Northwest Corridor Study* defines Grand Avenue as an enhanced arterial and limited expressway. According to Mr. Kubasiak, the new grade separations have improved the traffic flow, but the additional traffic lights installed for new development have not been good for the flow. He expressed concern that the improvements needed at Thunderbird Road in El Mirage were not on the list. . ADOT Community Relations Director Tim Tait responded that this project is included in the frontage road improvements category.
- h) Doug Doede – Mr. Doede also represents El Mirage. He said Grand Avenue is a magnet that encourages West Valley development, but hasn't been able to keep up with the growth. He has seen renderings of grade separations and new exits for Grand Avenue, and believes this Working Group can fine tune the plans. He said that, although they will not be able to please everyone, the Working Group can help plan the future.



- i) Chuck Ullman – Mr. Ullman represents the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association (PORA), and he believes Grand Avenue was originally planned as an express route. According to Mr. Ullman, traffic flow from Sun City to Phoenix is good; however, Sun City to Loop 303 is congested, and local residents are stuck. He added that the timing of traffic lights is also a problem. Mr. Ullman said he wants to know more about ADOT's plans and schedule, because his community needs answers.
 - j) Bob Jones – Mr. Jones also represents the Sun City West PORA, which regularly meets with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) regarding transportation issues. Mr. Jones has lived in the Valley since 1994, and he likes Grand Avenue when it moves faster than Bell Road. He feels a grade separation at R.H. Johnson Boulevard is needed.
 - k) Dave McGrew – Mr. McGrew, a City of Surprise business owner, likes Grand Avenue. He feels this is a great opportunity to plan, design and improve Grand Avenue west of Loop 101 and showcase engineering talents.
- 3. Meeting co-facilitator Dr. Marty Rozelle reviewed the Draft Operating Principles with the group. No one had comments or questions.
 - 4. Meeting co-facilitator Sue Lewin reviewed the Proposed Process with the group. It was noted that dates on the document would be corrected and color coding would be enhanced to identify working group activities.
 - 5. ADOT Sr. Project Manager Mike Delleo described the design process. DMJM Harris is ADOT's Project Management Consultant for the U.S. 60/Grand Avenue Corridor and will develop preliminary design plans (30 percent complete) for projects recommended through this study. The projects would then be assigned to a final design team. Proposed improvements would be based on recommendations from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) *Grand Avenue Northwest Corridor Study*. He also described the Regional Transportation Plan for Maricopa County (RTP) Phase I projects that will widen Grand Avenue from 83rd to 99th avenues, and from 99th Avenue to Loop 303. The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to identify additional improvements for Grand Avenue – over and above the current widening projects – that would be constructed in Phase II of the RTP, which spans fiscal years 2011 to 2015.
 - 6. Project engineer Mike Kies (DMJM Harris) reiterated that the starting point for the Feasibility Study is the MAG *Grand Avenue Northwest Corridor Study*, which defined Grand Avenue as an enhanced arterial and limited expressway. He said that is different from other Valley freeways, such as Loop 101, which is a controlled access highway. According to Mr. Kies, the projects listed in the Feasibility Study came from previous studies, projects, and the *Grand Avenue Northwest Corridor Study*, which identified as the No. 1 priority to widen it to six continuous lanes. He added that another top priority, a recommendation to construct a grade separation at El Mirage Road, is currently underway by MCDOT and would not come out of the \$64 million funded by RTP Phase II. Mr. Kies noted that funding for enhanced signal coordination, lighting and landscaping is included in the current RTP Phase I widening project. He said the MAG study recommended as Priority 2 and 3 the construction of grade separations at Meeker/Reems Road to provide better access to the hospital, at Bell Road, and other grade separation projects that have been identified by the local communities are at Greenway Road, 103rd Avenue and 107th Avenue. Mr. Kies cited the frontage road



improvements that have also been identified by local communities, including Thunderbird Road in the City of El Mirage. He said potential closure of the El Mirage Drainage Channel has also been listed, as well as continuous sidewalks in various locations throughout the corridor. Mr. Kies mentioned that the widening projects include enough room for bicycle lanes on both sides of Grand Avenue; however, the local jurisdictions would be responsible for striping bicycle lanes.

7. General Discussion:

- a) A Working Group member asked if the \$64 million allocated in 2006 contained some escalation factor. Mike Delleo said there is some type of escalation factor built into the funding.
- b) The need for a grade separation at R H Johnson was brought up again. Mike Kies said that project was not included in the current list of projects but would be brought back to the Study Team (includes participation by ADOT, MAG, Maricopa County, Youngtown, and the cities of El Mirage and Surprise) for consideration.
- c) One of the representatives from El Mirage said his city may be willing to pitch in to help fund projects. Mike Kies said the \$64 million has been allocated by MAG.
- d) One Working Group member brought up the potential for development of light rail and commuter rail along Grand Avenue and asked how it would impact this study. Tim Tait said no light rail transit is under study for this area, but commuter rail is being examined for the Northwest Valley. Mr. Tait said this project would not impact Grand Avenue as the railroad has enough right-of-way for a second line. Mike Kies told the group that all projects would be designed so as not to impact the railroad right-of-way.
- e) Another member asked if rubberized asphalt would be included in the projects. Mike Delleo answered that the widening projects include rubberized asphalt. It was mentioned that the Burlington Northern – Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) would contribute 5 percent if ADOT eliminated an at-grade crossing.
- f) A concern was raised about future projects impacting current ones. A Working Group member asked the question, “Are you going to widen Grand Avenue then come back later and tear up Grand to construct an overpass?” It was reiterated that the Regional Transportation Plan for Maricopa County, development of which was a collaborative regional effort spearheaded by the Maricopa Association of Governments, provides funding in Phase I (2006-2010) to construct the widening projects and funding in Phase II (2011-2015) for unspecified improvements in accordance with the MAG *Grand Avenue Northwest Corridor Study*. The purpose of the Feasibility Study is to identify specific improvements to be recommended for the Phase II funding.



8. Dr. Marty Rozelle introduced the exercise to generate the evaluation criteria needed to prioritize the potential Phase II projects. The following suggestions were made by the Grand Avenue Working Group members:

- **Continuous traffic flow**
 - Ease congestion at intersections
 - Eliminate gridlocks on and off Grand
 - Ease of access to businesses
 - Emergency and hospital access
- **Safety**
 - Speed of vehicle
 - Vehicle type to cross
 - Pedestrian access
 - Traffic flow on and off Grand safely at frontage roads
 - Age of user
 - Alleviate fear of driving on Grand Avenue
- **Bang for the buck**
 - Combine projects
- **Access**
 - To communities – don't isolate any community
 - To businesses – (Pre-and post-construction hindrance to local businesses)
 - To hospitals
 - Emergency vehicles
 - Pedestrians
 - Alleviate fear of driving on Grand Avenue – (e.g., people are confused about how to get to a certain business if it is on the other side of the street)
- **Accommodate vehicles of all speeds and types** (e.g., golf carts, motorized wheelchairs)
 - Consider age of user
- **Constructability**
 - Traffic accommodation during construction
 - Neighborhood integrity – keep neighborhood character in tact after construction
- **Financial Feasibility**
 - Bang for the buck – give priority to opportunities to augment funds from other sources
 - Combine projects – plan ahead and group construction projects. Tear up roadway only once



9. Next Meeting – It was the consensus of the Working Group members that were present for the meeting that afternoon meetings work best. The Study Team members said they would target November 28 or 29 for the next Working Group meeting, and that they would coordinate with all of the Group members regarding the date, time and location.

Action Items:

1. Provide revised Study Process chart to Working Group Members – S. Lewin
2. Provide copy of Meeting Minutes to Study Team and Working Group Members – S. Lewin
3. Coordinate with Study Team and Working Group Members on November meeting dates. – J. Lewin